United Nations S/PV.4738

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4738th meeting

Thursday, 10 April 2003, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Schumacher
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

The situation in Cyprus

Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/2003/398.

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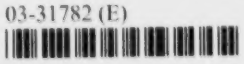

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Cyprus

Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/2003/398)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Alvaro de Soto to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, contained in document S/2003/398.

The Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus. I welcome him and give him the floor.

Mr. de Soto (*spoke in Spanish*): As you, Mr. President, have just said, the Security Council has before it the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/398) on his efforts between late 1999 and 11 March 2003 to assist the two sides in Cyprus to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

This is the first written report on the Secretary-General's mission of good offices since June 1999. It covers a long period of negotiations. It describes the Secretary-General's thinking underlying his comprehensive proposals. It makes a good number of observations on the process and on the way ahead. That explains its length.

In a way, the report speaks for itself, and I only wish to add a few comments, for which, with your blessing, Mr. President, I will switch to the language of the Cyprus problem.

(*spoke in English*)

The Cyprus problem is the oldest item continually on the Secretary-General's peacemaking agenda. It is difficult to see a set of circumstances for achieving a settlement as propitious as that which prevailed in the last three and a half years.

In terms of the wider political environment in the region, all the conditions were in place. In addition, the Secretary-General himself was deeply and heavily involved in the effort, throwing his full backing behind it. The Council strongly supported him every step of the way. And, I believe, a fair and honourable package, comprehensive in approach and only needing technical finalization, was on the table.

The fact that a solution has not been achieved in those circumstances is therefore deeply disappointing. It seems attributable to failings of political will rather than to the absence of favourable circumstances. Obviously, towards the end of the process, when decisions had to be made, the crisis in Iraq loomed large and made it difficult, particularly for Turkey, to take bold decisions and bring the necessary influence to bear in order to achieve a settlement. Be that as it may, a unique opportunity has been missed, and the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots have been denied the opportunity to vote to reunite Cyprus. This the Secretary-General deeply regrets.

The immediate losers are the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, but the Greek Cypriots and Greece are also losers; this is truly a lose-lose outcome. The Secretary-General's views as to why this opportunity was missed are contained in his report, so I will not dwell on them.

If the failure of this effort tells us anything, it confirms something that all of us already knew: this is one of the most difficult diplomatic problems in the world. That is why the Secretary-General believes that it would be a great step backward if the plan were simply allowed to wither away.

Of course, like all human endeavours, the plan presented by the Secretary-General, as revised finally on 26 February, is not perfect. No doubt, one can have different views about it, particularly in the details. But the plan represents the best effort of the United Nations

to generate a balanced and truly comprehensive proposal that resolves all issues, leaves little to be negotiated and, above all, represents a fair and honourable settlement that meets the core interests and aspirations of both sides. It is based on a three-and-a-half-year process of unprecedented intensity and stands on the shoulders of four decades of United Nations peacemaking efforts in Cyprus.

I urge members of the Council not to underestimate what an extraordinarily difficult task it is to achieve an overall balance on the range of issues that must be settled. Every word of the plan was worked on many times, carefully calibrated and weighed in the overall balance.

One Turkish columnist wrote that the plan is like an Alexander Calder mobile. All aspects are interconnected. If any significant piece is removed and the balance is altered, it could fall to the ground.

That is why the Secretary-General, in his report, speaks of the need in a future negotiation not to reopen the basic principles or key trade-offs in the plan. In the coming period, after the signature of the European Union accession treaty on 16 April, through the entry into force of that treaty on 1 May 2004 and in the run-up to the European Council of December 2004 — at which a decision is to be taken on accession talks with Turkey — the overwhelming need is for the parties to hew closely to the plan. To reopen its basic principles or key trade-offs would be to put the entire enterprise at peril.

That is why Mr. Denktash's suggestion at The Hague that the parties should return to a discussion of principles did not, in the Secretary-General's view, give any hope that an agreement could be achieved, and equally why Mr. Papadopoulos's preparedness not to reopen the substantive parts of the plan, if Mr. Denktash responded in the same manner, was welcome. The hope must be that, in time, the Turkish Cypriot side will come around to the same position that Mr. Papadopoulos took in The Hague.

In the Secretary-General's view, the point had been reached where the leaders on each side should accept that the plan could not be significantly improved by further negotiation and, therefore, that they should be prepared to finalize it and put it to referendum. This is what the Secretary-General said to the leaders when he was in Cyprus on 27 February. Without that honest intellectual realization on the part of both sides, and without the leaders' being prepared to explain this to their people, it is difficult to see a settlement being achieved.

Looking to the future, as his report outlines, the Secretary-General does not intend to take a new initiative unless and until such time as he has solid reason to believe that the political will necessary for a successful outcome exists. This would come about if there was an unequivocally stated preparedness on the part of the leaders of both sides, fully and determinedly backed at the highest political level in both motherlands, to commit to finalizing the plan, without reopening its basic principles or key trade-offs, by a specific date, with United Nations assistance; and to putting it to separate simultaneous referendums, as provided for in the plan, on a certain date soon thereafter. The onus is on the parties and the motherlands to demonstrate the political will to solve the problem on the basis of his plan, in the manner which the Secretary-General has suggested.

Since the events described in this report, Mr. Denktash has written to Mr Papadopoulos proposing that they meet to discuss a range of confidence-building measures. Mr. Denktash's letter is in the public domain. He was motivated to do this, according to his letter, in order to address the deep crisis of confidence which he believes exists between the two sides and which, in his view, was a major cause of the stalemate at The Hague.

Mr. Papadopoulos responded that, in his view, the stalemate was caused not by a crisis of confidence, but by Mr. Denktash and Turkey's not accepting the Secretary-General's plan as the basis for negotiating a final settlement. Mr. Papadopoulos restated in the most clear terms that he remains committed, even after 16 April, to finding a solution "within the parameters of the Annan plan", and called on Mr. Denktash to indicate that he accepts the Secretary-General's plan as the basis for a further negotiating process.

Mr. Denktash responded by reiterating his conviction that a crisis of confidence has obstructed all efforts, including the most recent one, to resolve the Cyprus problem and said that his confidence-building proposals remain on the table. He reaffirmed a point made in his earlier letter, namely, that he continues to support the good offices mission of the Secretary-General. On this, he and Mr. Papadopoulos appear to be in agreement. However, Mr. Denktash, without

accepting the Secretary-General's plan as the basis for a further negotiating process, proposed that the leaders should discuss the amendments they want to present to it and, if agreed, put the plan to referendum. To our knowledge, Mr. Papadopoulos has not responded to that further letter at this time.

As I said, the Secretary-General's report gives his views as to why the process was not successful and outlines what he believes should be the best way forward. The criteria contained therein will guide the Secretary-General in his good offices role in the future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.